

Bill Gossweiler



## Environmental Sharp Shooters Contest

**SOLDIERS** magazine reminds its readers who witness action on the Environmental Front to submit their best environmental photographs for a special "Environmental Sharp Shooters" feature in the April 2002 issue. Deadline for submission is Dec. 31. Entry categories include Readiness, Stewardship, Well-being and Community Outreach.

For more information, or to receive an Environmental Sharp Shooters application form and a complete set of rules, visit the U.S. Army Environmental Center website at <http://aec.army.mil>, or contact Cynthia Houston at [Environmental.Front@aec.apgea.army.mil](mailto:Environmental.Front@aec.apgea.army.mil), or call (410) 436-1270 (DSN 584-). — U.S. Army Environmental Center Public Affairs Office

## Volunteers Revitalize Army Lands

LAST year, 14 Army installations in 12 states celebrated National Public Lands Day by taking on environmental projects to improve woodland trails, foster native plant growth, promote bird habitat and increase forestation.

With the help of local volunteers, environmental groups and government organizations, the Army plans to expand that record during this year's event, to be held Sept. 29.

Sponsored by the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to scientifically sound environmental education, National Public Lands Day provides the opportunity for public-land managers to apply for improvement grants of up to \$6,000.

Qualifying Army applicants must demonstrate that they have a public-land project on their installations that includes community outreach and will be undertaken on or around the last Saturday in September.

More than 70 volunteers planted a model native-species garden on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., to celebrate the seventh annual National Public Lands Day last September.

Sponsored by the U.S. Army Environmental Center and the proving ground, the event resulted in the first phase of a planned demonstration "BayScape" next to USAEC's headquarters in the Edgewood area of the installation.

BayScapes are environmentally sound landscapes that benefit people, wildlife and the

Chesapeake Bay, where the proving ground is located. Plants used in the BayScape are native to the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

"We are gathered here to show that the Army is a good steward of the lands that have been entrusted to us by the American people," COL Stanley Lillie, USAEC commander, said at the event. "By partnering with our neighbors on a project like BayScapes, we also grow as a community. Together, we learn how important it is to take care of the land."

Boy Scout Matthew Thies of Troop 777 in Bel Air, Md., helped plan the National Public Lands Day project to fulfill the requirements for the Scouts' Hornaday conservation award. The BayScape project "sets the example to the community that native plants need less care and that they aren't just shrub bushes that don't look appealing. They have beauty in themselves," Thies said.

Though events took place across the country, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland's largest federal land holding, was a fitting place to celebrate the occasion, said Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.).

"Its open spaces, forests and wetlands provide crucial natural habitat for many species of birds and mammals that represent an important part of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem," he said. "The Army obviously has an important responsibility to be a good steward of the land for which it is responsible."

Mario Briscoe, a 6th grader from Edgewood Middle School, was one of the many young people who helped plant the BayScape.

"I'm glad I came. It's fun, and I like helping," he said. By planting, "we are adding more to the environment and helping to re-



store trees and plants.”

His mother, LTC Crystal Briscoe of the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute, also brought husband Lee, and daughter Jada, 2.

“I feel we should all be aware that if we continue to take from the environment and not give back, pretty soon there will be nothing left,” Briscoe said. “And I want my children to realize that at an early age.”

National Public Lands Day has grown from 200 volunteers in three states in 1993 to nearly 45,000 volunteers in 2000 who helped to improve public lands on 277 sites in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Officials estimate that diligent efforts combined with community contributions of food, tools and equipment resulted in more than \$6.5 million of improvements to public lands as a result of the 2000 program.

For more information on applying for a National Public Lands Day grant, contact Patti Pride at (202) 833-2933, Ext. 474, or e-mail her at [pride@neetf.org](mailto:pride@neetf.org).

For more information on BayScapes or on a National Public Lands Day event going on at an Army post near you, contact Janmichael Graine at (410) 436-7113 or e-mail [Janmichael.Graine@aec.apgea.army.mil](mailto:Janmichael.Graine@aec.apgea.army.mil). — U.S. Army Environmental Center PAO

## HAZMAT Teams Share Critical Training

FORT McCoy, Wis., firefighters who would deal with hazardous-material-response scenarios recently shared required training with their counterparts from the Trane Company in nearby La Crosse.

The HAZMAT training helped renew the two organizations’ partnership, which began several years ago, said 1LT Gordon Billings, Fort McCoy Fire Department HAZMAT officer and course instructor.

Billings said the Environmental Protection Agency requires those involved in hazardous-material cleanup to take an eight-hour refresher course each year to retain certification. This is the second year Fort McCoy has hosted the course.

Fort McCoy and Trane, a supplier of climate-control systems, both have hazardous-materials response teams and personnel from each organization would aid the other organization if called upon.

“It has worked very well,” Billings said. “We have the classroom space and can offer them hands-on training. And the attendees can share infor-

mation among themselves.”

Larry Marshall, a member of the Trane spill-response team, said Trane employees enjoy coming to Fort McCoy for the training because of the classroom space, the good facilities and the professionalism of fire department personnel.

The Fort McCoy Fire Department team has a Level A HAZMAT rating and the Trane team has a Level B rating, which means Fort McCoy can handle more-complicated scenarios because it has more-advanced equipment, Billings said.

But Marshall said many of the Trane team members also have Level A certifications, so it’s a good opportunity for them to practice using the advanced equipment and performing tasks and refining communica-

tion techniques in protective clothing. The protective clothing can be a special challenge because it is bulky and the personnel have to use oxygen tanks and protective masks that make moving, talking and hearing more difficult, Marshall said.

Mike Bilse, a Trane safety engineer, said the dialogue between the personnel on HAZMAT teams is a benefit.

“We do the same types of things, so it gives us a chance to get insight about potential problems and solutions from other HAZMAT personnel,” Bilse said. “It’s good to establish a working relationship. The time might come when one team might need personnel or equipment support from the other.”

Pat Smith, a Trane safety technician, said it’s absolutely necessary to get the training and maintain their skills in HAZMAT procedures.

“If you don’t keep it up, and you make one mistake as a result, someone might pay for it,” Smith said. “You need to know and practice the skills.” — *Fort McCoy Triad newspaper*



**1LT Gordon Billings (left) explains a HAZMAT scenario to students during the training at Fort McCoy.**